



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to CIO Special Envoy Talvitie's Report on Armenia and Moldova

As delivered by Chargé d' Affaires Kyle Scott
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
March 13, 2008

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States greatly appreciates the diligent efforts of Ambassador Heikki Talvitie, the special envoy of the Chairman in Office, to help defuse the tense situation in Armenia following the violence on March 1st. Ambassador Talvitie, we appreciate your timely briefing before the Permanent Council concerning both Armenia and Moldova.

These are difficult times for Armenia and its citizens, times which demand principled leadership and national reconciliation. The OSCE can, and should, contribute to this process.

Armenia stands at a crossroads. We deplore the tragic violence of March 1 that resulted in at least 8 deaths. We call for the prosecution of all those who committed unlawful acts of violence and violated election laws. At the same time, arrests of opposition political leaders only jeopardize Armenia's reputation as a country that shares the OSCE's fundamental principles of freedom, democracy, and human rights.

The government and opposition must coalesce around a path toward a shared democratic future. The state of emergency should be lifted, a free press and all civil liberties should be restored, and a genuine political dialogue should be launched between the government and opposition.

The alternative is a vicious cycle in which social tension increases, police and security personnel respond with force, public outrage builds, and the crisis only deepens. Using the good offices of the OSCE Mission and the Chairmanship, we should encourage all parties to pursue reconciliation, democracy, and respect for human rights. Armenia's democratic future should be determined in the ballot box and at roundtable discussions, not in the streets.

On the issue of Nagorno-Karabakh, we are deeply concerned by the escalation of tensions on the Line of Contact and deplore the loss of life during recent hostilities. We urge the parties to exercise maximal restraint and restore a full and unconditional ceasefire. The casualties along the Line of Contact underscore the urgent need for the sides to endorse the proposed Basic Principles for the peaceful resolution of the conflict. There is no military solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. We recognize Azerbaijan's territorial integrity and hold that the status of Nagorno-Karabakh is a subject for negotiations in the framework of the Basic Principles.

Turning to the situation in Moldova's Transnistria region, the United States is heartened by the commitment the Finnish Chairmanship in Office has displayed to finding a way forward.

In particular, we commend Ambassador Talvitie for his dedication to building confidence among all the parties and we endorse his call to get negotiations back on track. We hope the informal 3+2 discussions today in Vienna will open the door to further discussions under the 5+2 format as soon as possible.

In this regard, we recognize, too, the valuable work being done by the OSCE Mission in Moldova and its new Head of Mission, Ambassador Philip Remler. Day-to-day work on the ground to promote free movement, economic development and political dialogue is indispensable to building a solid foundation for resolving the Transnistrian conflict, which has gone on far too long.

The United States remains committed to the search for a solution that upholds Moldova's sovereignty and territorial integrity. The people who inhabit all parts of Moldova deserve a secure, peaceful and unified future. We wish Ambassador Talvitie well in his efforts to promote mutual engagement and confidence building, a goal that has our full support. We would welcome formation of joint working groups on practical matters by the parties to the conflict, as Moldova's President Voronin has proposed and which the OSCE Mission in Moldova would help to facilitate.

We extend thanks once again to Ambassador Talvitie for his report and for his good work.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.